

A Quarterly Newsletter of

North Andover

NASC
Sustainability Committee

www.townofnorthandover.com/recycle
recycle@townofnorthandover.com

Spring 2010



Why earn the “Green Community” designation?

Simple—to qualify for grants from a program funded at \$10 million annually! That’s why!

The Green Community designation was created by the Green Communities Act of 2008. The law outlines the criteria for qualification, which include promoting renewable energy facilities, establishing an energy use baseline for public facilities, developing a plan to reduce energy use by 20%, purchasing fuel-efficient public vehicles, and minimizing facility life cycle costs. For communities that achieve this designation, the Act commits annual funding from the proceeds of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which



is not tax revenue, to a grant program for energy efficiency, energy conservation, and renewable energy initiatives.

With the help of the Department of Energy Resources, the North Andover Sustainability Committee and the Town of North Andover have begun gathering and analyzing energy records for all municipal buildings over the last few years. Our goal is to identify potential capital projects that could be accomplished should we earn the Green Community distinction. This year, grants are capped at \$1 million per project. Just think of the possibilities! Stay tuned for more details.

Kill-a-Watt Meters Now Available at Stevens Memorial Library

The North Andover Sustainability Committee has purchased three Kill-a-Watt meters that are available for checkout from the library. Over the 14-day checkout period, homeowners can easily test what their electric appliances are costing to run—by the hour, day, week, month, or year. How much is that old refrigerator costing you per year? Read the screen and weep! Then start shopping for a new Energy Star-rated model that will pay for itself in a few short years. Ask at the circulation desk for meter availability and begin your electric sleuthing work. It’s fun and educational, too.



Oh, my! We have a compost bin for you!

by Mary Foley

Across the U.S., yard trimmings comprise 13.2% of waste generated. In any given yard, the size of the lawn, the number of trees, and the presence of gardens and planting beds can affect how much yard waste you

have. Many grass clippings never leave the lawn, being “grasscycled” instead. Some yard waste is collected through municipal programs and composted at large-scale facilities, such as the Cyr Recycling Center on Sharpners Pond Road. And other yard waste is recycled at home with the help of a compost pile or bin.

I have been composting all my life. As
(Continued on Page 4)

On May 22, the North Andover Sustainability Committee and Master Gardener Jack Wagner will be at the Stevens-Coolidge Plant Sale with a composting and vermicomposting display and demonstration. You can come see different kinds of composting bins and systems, learn how to set one up, and discover which materials to put into the bin. A working worm composting bin will also be on site, and free samples of castings and composting worms will be available while supplies last.



We got it!



The Department of Energy Resources has awarded North Andover \$103,846 to put solar panels onto the roof at the High School. This grant, coupled with another \$16,000 earned through the Clean Energy Choice program, will enable us to put a 20-kilowatt system on the Arts Building roof, just above the Technology Education Department. Information about the energy generated by the panels will be displayed on an educational display in the technology lab.

A system of this size can be expected to generate as much as 22,000 kWh (kilowatt hours) of electricity per year, saving the School Department a substantial amount on the High School’s electric bill annually. Construction will start this spring.

Steve Foster, North Andover



Sustainability Committee member and LEED AP (a professional certification through the Green Building Certification Institute), worked with Public Works Director Bruce Thibodeau to identify the optimal roof space. The project was awarded to Nexamp (www.Nexamp.com) through the public bidding process, and then Dan Leary, President and COO of Nexamp and North Andover resident, worked closely with Community Development Director Curt Bellavance to submit the grant proposal. Great team effort!

Recycling “know-how”

To be a good recycler, you need to have “know-how.” You need to know where and how to recycle, as well as what materials are accepted. Without this knowledge, you will make mistakes. For instance, you might end up throwing away something that you could recycle. With tight budgets all around, including for the Town, does it really make sense for us to spend \$275,000 per year burning material that could be recycled? Or, you might put items that we don’t accept into your bin, creating extra work for hauling and sorting crews.

Recycling at the curb is simple with our new single-stream program, or, as we like to call it, “zero-sort.” You can just rinse and toss your cans, bottles, and jars into your bin. There is no need to remove labels, caps, or lids. Paper products can be placed into the same recycling container, and there is no need to remove staples, paper clips, or windows from envelopes. You can put all of your material into a wheeled recycling cart (available from most home supply and hardware stores).

At the curb, you can recycle all of these materials:

- Plastic containers marked with #1-#7 in the chasing-arrows recycling symbol – NO plastic bags
- Steel “tin” food and beverage cans
- All colors of glass bottles and jars that held food and beverage products
- Aluminum cans, pie plates, and foil – Please clean pie plates and foil.
- Paper, including newspapers, inserts, magazines, catalogs, phone books, junk mail, and corrugated cardboard – No soiled or waxed paper and no foil-based or waxed boxes

Recyclables are picked up at the curb every week on the same day as your trash. If you don’t use a wheeled cart with a lid, please bundle your paper products or place them in a paper bag to keep them from blowing through your neighborhood.

Recyclables can also be dropped off at the North Andover Recycling Drop-Off Center, located at the TBI Recycling Facility at 210 Holt Road, Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Show your recycling “know-how”—recycle everything you can!

Earth Day: A History

You'll hear a lot about Earth Day over the next month because 2010 marks the 40th anniversary of the first Earth Day. On April 22, 1970, about 20 million Americans gathered in their neighborhoods, hometowns, state capitals, and Washington, D.C. Events ranged from litter cleanups and tree plantings to demonstrations and "teach-ins" to increase environmental awareness and knowledge.

That first Earth Day was the culmination of efforts begun a century earlier and inspired by naturalists, such as Henry David Thoreau and John Muir. Early in the 20th century, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service were founded, devoting themselves to protection of our public lands and natural heritage resources. In the 1920s, Marjory Stoneman Douglas began her work to save the Florida Everglades. The storms of the 1930s that caused the Dust Bowl in the Great Plains led to conservation efforts on farm and ranch lands. In 1948, the first piece of legislation that regulated water quality, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, was passed by Congress. In 1953, Keep America Beautiful was founded, largely to address the eyesore and hazards of roadside litter. In 1962, Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, sounded the alarm about the effects of pesticides on wildlife, as well as humans.

In 1963, Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson accompanied President John F. Kennedy on a speaking tour focused on environmental concerns. After President Kennedy's death, Nelson continued to work on the issue, but the next six years were consumed by other priorities.

Then, in 1969, three things occurred that got the nation's attention. In early January, Americans got their first glimpse of the earth as seen from space in photos



Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, exposed the risks associated with certain pesticides, some of which were banned less than a decade later.

(Photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

taken by the Apollo space crew. In late January, an oil spill fouled the California coast near Santa Barbara. In June, a chemical fire on Cleveland's Cuyahoga River received national media coverage. In 1969, the "enough is enough" moment occurred and Americans mobilized.

Senator Nelson realized that the time was right to put the environment at the top of the national agenda. He enlisted the help of graduate student Denis Hayes and planning got under way. When Earth Day rolled around, even the organizers did not anticipate how large the crowds would be or how passionate the voices. Within a year, President Richard Nixon had established the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Congress had passed the Clean Air Act, and that was only the beginning.

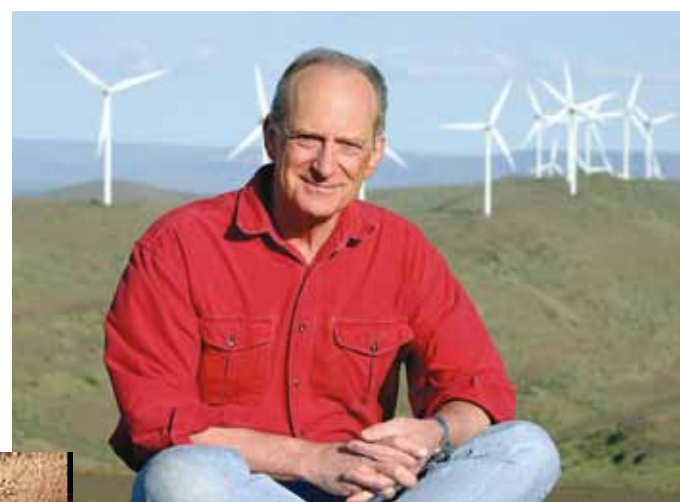
The work begun by Earth Day continued in the years that followed. In 1990, on the 20th anniversary of Earth Day, more than 200 million people in over 140 countries took part. In recent years, those numbers have continued to grow, with more than a billion people now taking part in annual celebrations, activities, and initiatives.

The motto of Earth Day is "Make Every Day Earth Day." By continuing our efforts to improve the environment in big and small ways, we are making every day and every year one for the earth and all of its inhabitants.



This hillside dump was photographed in 1972 as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "Documerica" project, which was intended to capture images of environmental problems.

(Photo by Gene Daniels, courtesy of U.S. EPA)



Denis Hayes was a graduate student when he agreed to work with Senator Gaylord Nelson to organize the first Earth Day. (Photo Courtesy of Zeitgeist Films)

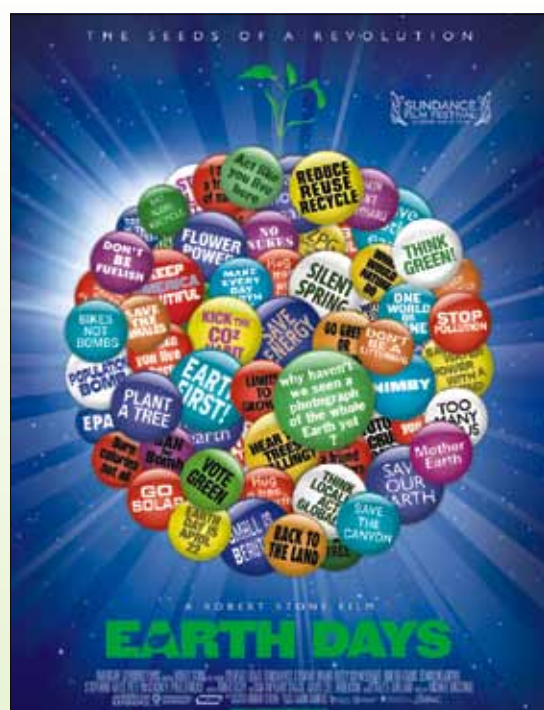
Read more about it!

Earth Day
www.earthday.net

Apollo 8's "Earthrise" Photo
www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/image_feature_102.html

Cuyahoga River Fire
www.cleveland.com/science/index.ssf/2009/06/cuyahoga_river_fire_40_years_a.html

Santa Barbara Oil Spill
www.dailynexus.com/article.php?a=16459



Earth Days

Last year, a documentary, "Earth Days: The Seeds of a Revolution," opened at the Sundance Film Festival. The film traces the beginnings of the modern environmental movement through the first Earth Day and the actions that followed. The documentary will air on "American Experience" on PBS on April 19 and will be available on DVD after that.

To learn more, visit www.earthdaysmovie.com or www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/earthdays/.

FAST FACTS

Cook, clean, deodorize

What gives lift to your homemade cookies, creates a soothing paste for a sunburn, deodorizes your fridge, and cleans your bathroom? Baking soda, of course! Baking soda, or sodium bicarbonate, is a leavening agent used in baking, but it is also so much more.

Baking soda mixed with dish soap makes a versatile cleaning scrub. Mixed with white vinegar, baking soda can be used as an all-purpose cleaner. Baking soda can help deodorize trash cans, garbage disposals, laundry, gym bags, tennis shoes, cat litter boxes, hampers, and other smelly items. A paste made from baking soda and a small amount of water can soothe skin irritations caused by sunburn or insect bites.

For more baking soda solutions, go online and search for "baking soda solutions" or check out *Baking Soda Bonanza* by Peter A. Ciullo or *Green Up Your Cleanup* by Jill Potvin Schoff.



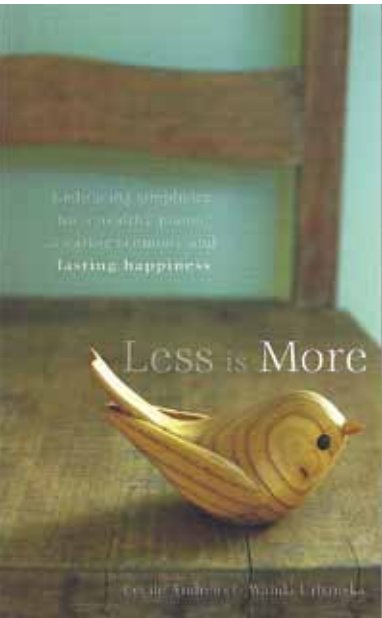
Green @ Home

Looking for ways to "green" your home? Whether you want to reduce your energy use, conserve water, choose environmentally friendly materials and products, reduce your waste, or protect your health, you'll find suggestions at www.epa.gov/greenhomes. Find specific ideas for each area of your home with the room by room feature.

Spring reading, naturally

As the temperatures warm, you may be looking forward to more time outdoors. Your plan may be to garden, bike or walk, or simply sit and enjoy the spring breezes and sunshine. Consider a trip to the library (or used bookstore), too. Nothing is finer than reading a good book outdoors on a warm spring day.

If you love nature, consider some classics. *Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters* by Annie Dillard will have you ready to do some exploration of your own. Are you itching to travel? Pick up *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail* by Bill Bryson. As two middle-aged men set out to hike the Appalachian Trail, you'll find humor and awe. Maybe it is the desert landscape that fires your imagination. Look for *Desert Solitaire* by Edward Abbey or *The Land of Little Rain* by Mary Austin. More



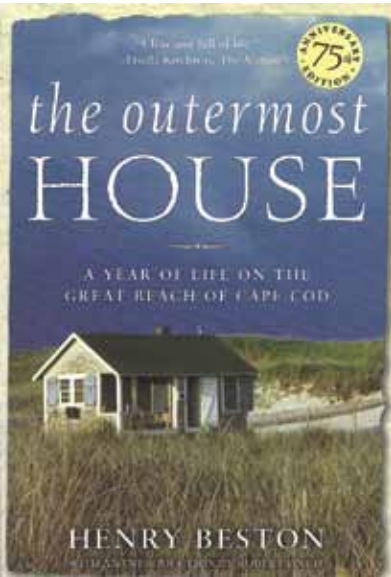
of a beach person? Track down a copy of *The Outermost House: A Year of Life on the Great Beach of Cape Cod* by Henry Beston. You might also look for works by John Muir, John McPhee, Gary Snyder, and Maxine Kumin, among others.

If you prefer your nature closer to the local coffee shop, look for *City Wilds: Essays and Stories About Urban Nature*, edited by Terrell F. Dixon. *City Wilds* celebrates the natural world that

is closest to home for many Americans.

Perhaps you are interested in how we form communities. A National Science Foundation study in 2007 found that as many as one quarter of Americans have no one to confide in or celebrate with. In *Population: 485 – Meeting Your Neighbors One Siren at a Time*, Michael Perry writes of returning to his hometown and joining the volunteer fire department. One emergency call at a time, he connects with his neighbors and explores the place where he grew up with new eyes. In *Less Is More: Embracing Simplicity for a Healthy Planet, a Caring Economy, and Lasting Happiness*, edited by Cecile Andrews and Wanda Urbanska, the authors ostensibly address how to embrace a simpler lifestyle. However, their real concerns seem to be how we find and maintain more enriching relationships. The reader is challenged to ask the question, “What do I have to offer?”

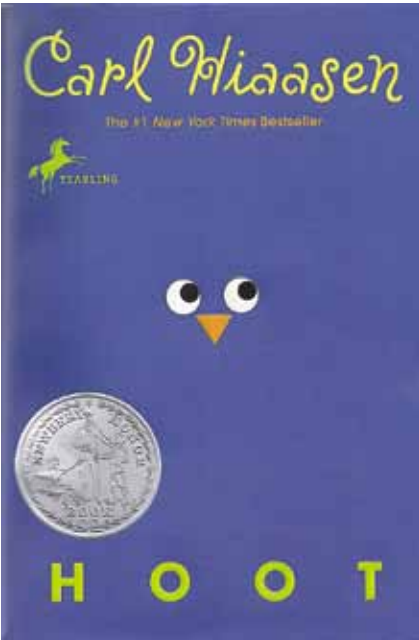
If you have children in your life, check out *Get Out! 150 Easy Ways for Kids & Grown-Ups to Get into Nature and Build a Greener Future* by Judy Molland. This book is full of ideas to get families and groups outside where they will learn about nature as they enjoy it.



Sharing books with young people builds relationships and improves their reading skills. For wonderful books about the natural world, look for Lynne Cherry's books, such as *The Armadillo from Amarillo* or *The Sea, the Storm, and the Mangrove Tangle*; *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* by Chief Seattle, illustrated by Susan Jeffers; and *Just Us Two: Poems About Animal Dads* by Joyce Sidman. Encourage young gardeners with *The Empty Lot* by Dale H. Fife, *The Gardener* by Sarah Stewart, *A Handful of Dirt* by Raymond Bial, and Lorraine Roulston's series on Pee Wee, the worm. For the slightly older crowd, suggest a simple chapter book, such as *Judy Moody Saves the World* by Megan McDonald.

Pre-teens can be a harder group to please. Get them excited about the environment with Carl Hiaasen's eco-thrillers: *Hoot*, *Flush*, and *Scat*. In these books, youth find—and find ways to solve—environmental problems created by adults.

Obviously, there are many more great books for children, teens, and adults. Take advantage of that reuser's paradise—the local library—and enjoy good reading with the good weather!

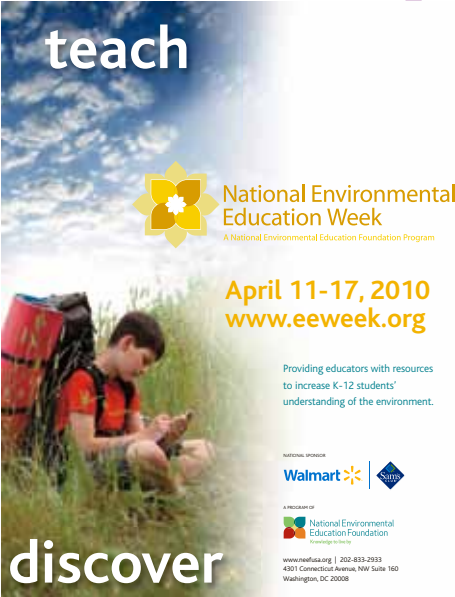


What a week!

In the week before Earth Day each year, students and teachers are invited to explore the natural world during National Environmental Education Week. Environmental education isn't just for the science classroom, but can include activities in social studies, language arts, math, art, music, and more. Environmental education gets students excited because they get involved in real-world problem solving.

There are many ways for students and teachers to take part in Environmental Education Week, beginning with incorporating environmental themes and topics into daily lessons. But the activities don't end there. Students can be encouraged to write conservation plans for home and school, audit energy and water use or trash disposal, set up a nature walk or scavenger hunt, take part in a litter cleanup, visit a local utility facility (power plant, water treatment plant, wastewater plant, recycling facility, etc.), start or expand a school recycling program, and much more. Get parent organizations and clubs into the act, as well!

Environmental Education Week 2010 is April 11-17. This year's focus will be on conserving water and energy to preserve our planet and save money. For more information, visit www.eeweeek.org.



Those who dwell, as scientists or laymen, among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.... There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter.

Rachel Carson, 1907–1964
from *The Sense of Wonder*
American biologist

One Change

If you were going to make one change this month, what would it be? We have a suggestion! Purchase recycled-content trash bags and trash can liners. When you are at the store to buy trash bags and can liners, read the labels and look for phrases like “made with recycled content” and “made with post-consumer recycled content.”

Don't forget reuse. Plastic shopping bags can be used as liners for small wastebaskets.



It's the only planet we've got

In early 1969, people around the world got their first glimpse of the earth as seen from space in a photo taken by the Apollo 8 crew. To most of us living our daily lives, the planet seems vast and limitless. From space, our planet looks small, fragile, and isolated. The photo became what one wilderness photographer referred to as "the most influential environmental photograph ever taken." After seeing this photo, people began to think about the earth in a new way. The planet that provides us with protection from space and on which we rely for our air, water, food, and shelter needs our protection, too.

NASA



It's not surprising that little more than a year after this photo was published, 20 million Americans took part in the first Earth Day. At rallies, cleanups, educational forums, and other events, Americans young and old took a hard look at our environment and decided to improve it. The actions that followed led to many changes, including cleaner air and safer water. From integrated pest management on our farms to cleaner smokestacks in our cities, from recycling bins to more fuel-efficient cars, individuals, businesses, institutions, and government agencies created an infrastructure to care for the most basic part of our infrastructure—our planet.

In the 40 years since that first Earth Day, people around the globe have continued to set aside one day to be grateful for the good things on our planet and to find ways to take better care of it.

Here are some ways that you can celebrate Earth Day in April and all year long:

- Participate in our **Earth Day Cleanup** on **Saturday, May 1**. We'll be picking up litter and sprucing up our community for spring and summer. Let us know if you would like to participate by sending an email to recycle@townofnorthandover.com.
- Take a walk, ride a bike, or just sit outside. Know and enjoy nature.
- Plant a tree. Trees make our communities more beautiful and provide cooling shade. To learn more about tree planting, visit www.arborday.org.
- Reduce the amount that you drive by planning an efficient route for errands and carpooling when possible.
- Save electricity by turning off lights, TVs, and computers when they aren't in use.
- Use water wisely. Run your dishwasher and washing machine with full loads. Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Reduce your waste by reusing more of what you already have.
- Recycle your unneeded paper products and containers.
- Limit your use of toxic lawn and household products.
- Properly dispose of problem wastes, such as household and garden chemicals, electronics, and old tires.
- Become a champion for good environmental practices at work or at school.



Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Drop-Off Event will be held on Saturday, April 17, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the North Andover Recycling Drop-Off Center, which is located at the TBI Facility at 210 Holt Road. HHW includes household chemicals, lawn and garden products, and automotive fluids. Residents are allowed to drop off HHW at no charge. Residents will have to pay a nominal fee for car batteries, propane tanks, paint, TVs, and computer monitors. **(Motor oil is only accepted at the DPW and will not be accepted at this event.)**



Spring collection of yard waste, such as sticks, branches, and small limbs, that came down during the late fall and winter, is scheduled for April 5 through April 23 on your regular trash collection day. Place all limbs with the butt end toward the curb. Materials will be fed directly into a chipper which can accept limbs and branches of up to 3" in diameter. After May 7, residents are welcome to pick up

wood chips at the Cyr Recycling Center on Sharpners Pond Road.



Order your rain barrel now and pick it up on Saturday, May 8, at the DPW, which is located at 384 Osgood Street. The New England Rain Barrel Company makes 55-gallon, blue, recycled-content plastic rain barrels. The rain barrels can be ordered by calling the New England Rain Barrel Company at 978-977-3135 or online at www.nerainbarrel.com. The purchase price is \$72.50. If you place your order by April 29, your rain barrel will be available for pickup on May 8 between 9 a.m. and noon.



Document Shredding Events: RiverBank will be sponsoring two paper shredding events this spring. They will be held from 9 a.m. until noon at these bank branch locations: Saturday, May 8 in Derry, NH; and Saturday, May 15 at Jackson Street in Methuen.

In the fall, NASC will host a paper shredding day which will be announced in the fall edition of this newsletter, as well as by email to those who request notification by sending an email to recycle@townofnorthandover.com.



Save the date and donate on **Zero Waste Day** on May 8, from 9 a.m. to noon, at Brickstone Square in Andover. Donate your used things and find new space in your closets! The Andover Recycling Committee will be hosting eight local charities that will accept your used items, such as clothing, shoes, household goods, hard- and soft-cover books, CDs, DVDs, videos, records, audiobooks, cribs, pack-n-plays, high chairs, swings, baby blankets, baby gates, baby linens, strollers, exersaucers, jogging strollers or prams, board games,

puzzles, books, computer software, small baby and children's toys, and unused and clean building materials. Drive through and volunteers will help unload your items to load them into the waiting trucks! There will be no dumpster on site, so some items may be turned away if they are not of use to the charities. For more information or to volunteer, contact Marya Lundgren at mclundgren@comcast.net.



Come join us for the revived North Andover Spring **Sheep Shearing** at the Town Common on Sunday, May 23. Enjoy the Common, sheep shearing, and other family-oriented activities! North Andover Sustainability Committee will have a table to answer all of your solid waste and energy conservation questions!



Take part in the **Town-Wide Yard Sales** on Saturday, June 26 and Sunday, June 27. Eliminate some of your clutter, make a little extra money, and provide useful things to someone who will use them. It's easy to participate! If you will be holding a sale, please register at www.townofnorthandover.com/recycle by June 22. Watch for flyers and information about local sales at our website by June 24.

Compost bin

(Continued from Page 1)

a child growing up in town, we always had a small bin in the house for vegetable and fruit waste which then went outside to our compost bin. Today, I continue to compost all organic matter. I save kitchen scraps and sometimes even get donations from friends and family members. I also collect leaves and garden clippings and accept those from my good neighbors for my compost pile. I am a Master Gardener and grow organic fruits and vegetables on a small, in-town plot. I find that I grow closer to the earth each year.

To help you recycle organic waste at home, the Department of Public Works (DPW) sells discounted compost bins. This is a program we started in 1998; however, I am embarrassed to say that only 523 of an estimated 8,200 households have taken advantage of this program.

The Earth Machine Compost Bin retails for over \$100 and is, in my opinion, one of the best on the market today. North Andover residents can buy one from the DPW for only \$40! The bin comes with a booklet about composting and great resources and information for the beginner. It is made from high-quality 50% post-consumer recycled HDPE plastic. The bin can hold up to 11 cubic feet or 80 gallons of material and, yet, has a small footprint in your yard. It comes with a 10-year warranty. Two years ago, the company replaced a cracked part on one of my two compost bins with no questions asked and no hassle.

By composting in your backyard, you can help to reduce the large amount

of yard and garden clippings, food waste, and kitchen scraps that we are generating and paying to have incinerated every week. At the same time, you will be increasing soil fertility and adding valuable nutrients to your yard and garden with the composted material from your bin. You can also eliminate trips, and extra gasoline consumption, to deliver your yard waste to the Cyr Recycling Center.

Composting is so easy, and even the smallest yard can handle a compost bin. Fill your bin with organic waste and, within a year, you have a rich, dark brown compost to add to your soil. With the price of a cubic yard of compost at about \$40 plus delivery, your return on investment for your Earth Machine compost bin takes less than one year. Who could find a better bargain than that?

Yes, becoming a backyard composter will require some effort and make you change some of your habits, but isn't it worth it to create a healthier yard and make our community a better place to live, play, and work?

Hopefully, we will begin to see compost bins "sprouting up" all over town. With some encouragement, I hope our public facilities, local businesses, and schools join residents in composting more of our organic waste.

The NASC will be hosting free composting seminars and demonstrations soon. Our first composting seminar and demonstration day will be held at Stevens-Coolidge Place on Saturday, May 22 at the annual plant sale. Come and see composting in action!

If you would like to buy a low-cost

Earth Machine compost bin, please contact DPW at 384 Osgood Street. If you have comments, suggestions, or questions, please email me at mlgardn@gmail.com.

As a member of the North Andover Sustainability Committee (NASC), I marvel at the dynamic, committed efforts of this committee and its wonderful effect on our town. We are truly blessed with a group that is improving our environment and making our community an even better place to live. Join us in these efforts. A good way to begin would be to start composting!

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

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